ARTICLE ALERT

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POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

[1] The Two Worlds of Race Revisited: A Meditation On Race In The Age Of Obama Early, Gerald
Daedalus, Winter 2011. Vol. 140, Iss. 1; pg.11, 18 pgs
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Nearly fifty years ago, the American Academy organized a conference and two issues of its journal Daedalus on the topic of "The Negro American." The project engaged top intellectuals and policy-makers around the conflicts and limitations of mid-1960s liberalism in dealing with race. Specifically, they grappled with the persistent question of how to integrate a forced-worker population that had been needed but that was socially undesirable once its original purpose no longer existed. Today, racism has been discredited as an idea and legally sanctioned segregation belongs to the past, yet the question the conference participants explored - in essence, how to make the unwanted wanted - still remains. Recent political developments and anticipated demographic shifts, however, have recast the terms of the debate. Gerald Early, guest editor for the present volume, uses Barack Obama's election to the presidency as a pretext for returning to the central question of "The Negro American" project and, in turn, asking how white liberalism will fare in the context of a growing minority population in the United States. Placing his observations alongside those made by John Hope Franklin in 1965, Early positions his essay, and this issue overall, as a meditation on how far we have come in America to reach "the age of Obama" and at the same time how far we have to go before we can overcome "the two worlds of race."

[2] Do We Still Need Unions? Yes Klein, Ezra Newsweek, February 27, 2011 Click here for available text on the Internet

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's effort to end collective bargaining for public employees in his state unexpectedly became the best thing to happen to the union movement in recent memory, writes Klein. In just a few days, Walker did what unions have been failing to do for decades: unite the union movement and bring the decline of organized labor to the forefront of the national agenda. Although fewer than 7 percent of private workers are unionized today, unions still have a crucial role to play in America, says Klein. First, they give workers leverage for higher wages, voicing safety concerns, ideas to improve efficiency and protection from

retaliation. Second, unions are concerned with more than quarterly profit reports - what economist John Kenneth Galbraith called a "countervailing power" in an economy dominated by large corporations. Finally, unions bring some semblance of balance to a political system dominated by moneyed business interests. Organized labor has played a major role in promoting landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act and the Affordable Care Act - laws that benefit the general public, not just the unionized.

[3] Defying The Godfather Smithsonian, vol. 41, no. 6, October 2010, pp. 36-47 Hammer, Joshua Click here for available text on the Internet

Sicily is the birthplace of the Mafia, one of the world's most powerful organized-crime syndicates, which became entrenched in Sicily's isolated, largely rural society, and raked in billions through drug trafficking, extortion and rigged construction contracts. The Mafia retaliated against prosecutions and trials in the 1980s with a series of assassinations and car bombings, but this only galvanized the anti-Mafia movement. In recent years, there has been a growing citizens' movement in Sicily called Addiopizzo (Goodbye pizzo) who have organized resistance to the Mafia rackets that have collected pizzo, or protection money. One long-time Italian magistrate says that the Addiopizzo movement is a "revolutionary development", a sign of growing fearlessness among the public.

ENVIROMENT AND ENERGY

[4] A National Offshore Wind Strategy: Creating An Offshore Wind Energy Industry In The United States

U.S. Dept of Energy, February 2011, 52 pages

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A National Offshore Wind Strategy: Creating an Offshore Wind Energy Industry in the United States was prepared by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Wind and Water Power Program to outline the actions it will pursue to support the development of a world - class offshore wind industry in the United States. This National Offshore Wind Strategy will guide DOE as it expands its ongoing efforts through the Offshore Wind Innovation and Demonstration (OSWInD) initiative to promote and accelerate responsible commercial offshore wind development in the U.S. in both federal and state waters.

[5] Japan's Giant Shock Rattles Ideas About Earthquake Behavior Monastersky, Richard Scientific American, March 15, 2011 Click here for available text on the Internet

Noting that Japan's March 11 earthquake was a "lesson in humility", geophysicists want to understand why the Sendai quake was so much stronger than anyone expected, and what this portends for Japan and other seismic regions around the world. Few experts thought the region near Sendai, an older-crust subduction zone, was capable of producing a magnitude-9.0 earthquake; the seawalls along much of the coast were not tall enough to stop the mammoth tsunami that was spawned by the quake. However, the author notes, there were clues that the Sendai region might be subject to severe earthquakes; the 2004 Sumatra quake occurred in older subduction crust. Recent studies show that the Sendai region is getting squeezed by the motion of the tectonic plates -- the Pacific plate was stuck, and not smoothly sliding under Japan, causing strain to build up too quickly to be relieved by recent earthquakes. This is leading experts to more closely study regions such as Tonga and the northeastern Caribbean.

[6] Guarding Against Disaster: As Japan's Tragedy Becomes More Serious, So Does The Need To Learn From It Pollack, Joshua Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, posted 15 March 2011 Click here for available text on the Internet

Pollack, a consultant to the U.S. government, writes that, even as it gets worse, the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant "pales in comparison to Japan's natural disaster." One or more full-scale meltdowns could occur, and in a worst-case scenario, spread radiation over a wide area. We have a lot to learn from this calamity, says Pollack, not the least of those lessons are to determine what failed and why, and that the earthquake and tsunami may not be a statistical freak, that other regions of the world may experience a millennial disaster. He writes, "as hard as it may be to accept at this moment, humanity can expect to live with this technology for many decades, perhaps centuries to come; the needs of growing populations and economies simply cannot be denied, especially in the shadow of the global-warming threat."

[7] How Black Is The Japanese Nuclear Swan? Foss, Nicole The Automatic Earth, posted March 13, 2011 Click here for available text on the Internet

The author, a power-systems and nuclear-safety expert, argues that the Fukushima nuclear accident can hardly be considered a "black swan," an event that could not be foreseen; in a country with a long history of seismic activity, this catastrophe could be regarded as Japan's "Hurricane Katrina moment," a predictable event that was not adequately prepared for, despite the possibility of severe consequences. Foss writes that complacency as to risk is widespread in the atomic energy industry – "nuclear insiders in many jurisdictions are notorious for being an unaccountable power unto themselves, and failing to release critical information publicly." Among the drawbacks Foss sees with nuclear power: scaling it up requires enormous amounts of money and time; uranium reserves, particularly the high-grade ores, are depleting rapidly; the unresolved issue of waste disposal; and, when looking at the full nuclear fuel cycle and the life-cycle of a plant, the net energy gain from nuclear power and the reduction in carbon-dioxide emissions are not impressive. In the author's view, "nuclear power represents an unjustified faith in the power of human societies to control

extremely complex technologies over the very long term ... [it] may allow us to cushion the coming decline in fossil fuel availability, but only at a potentially very high price."

[8] Japan's Once-Powerful Nuclear Industry Is Under Siege Fraser, Caroline

Yale Environment 360, posted March 17, 2011

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The author writes that the disaster unfolding at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant is prompting close scrutiny of Japan's nuclear policies. While Japan has first-rate anti-pollution laws, Fraser notes that "the lack of a vigorously independent press and a strong judiciary has enabled Japanese industry to resist legislation to safeguard the environment and human health." The nuclear industry, a major player in Japan's politically influential construction industry, has been forging ahead with plans to turn Japan into a "nuclear state", with a dozen new plants planned or under construction. One planned installation, the Kaminoseki nuclear plant, scheduled to be built on landfill in a national park on the spectacular Inland Sea, has sparked intense local opposition. The Inland Sea has also experienced major seismic activity, and was the epicenter of the 1995 Kobe earthquake. Despite the public protests, the Kaminoseki plant seemed unstoppable — until the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that crippled the Fukushima reactors. Two days later, construction on the plant was ordered to stop.

ECONOMICS AND TRADE ISSUES

 [9] The Economic Outlook And Macroeconomic Policy Bernanke, Ben S
 U.S. Federal Reserve, February 3, 2011, 11 pages

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"Today, I will provide a brief update on the economy and how I expect it to evolve in the near term. Then I will turn to the implications for monetary policy. Finally, I will briefly discuss the daunting fiscal challenges that we face as a nation."

[10] If The Chinese Bubble Burst --- Who Globally Would Be Most Affected? International Economy, Fall 2010, pp. 9-35

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The Chinese government may succeed in slowing the pace of rising asset values. In this issue, the editors of International Economy asked thirty experts for their views on what would happen if China's real-estate and productive-capacity asset bubble finally burst. In this symposium of views, respondents wrote that the effects would be widespread; Asian countries, developing economies, members of the Eurozone, the bond markets and the Chinese public themselves would be hard hit. One respondent notes that the asset bubble has its roots in the confiscation and collectivization of all land in 1949; a whole generation of Chinese policymakers had little concept of the value of land, so when a real-estate market started in the early 1990s, the power to sell or lease land was left to local governments. Land sales became a primary source of revenue to local governments and a major

contributor to GDP growth; local authorities therefore have a vested interest in perpetuating the property bubble.

[11] Four Lessons In Adaptive Leadership Useem, Michael Harvard Business Review, Nov 2010, Vol. 88 Issue 11, p86-90, 5 pages Ask IRC for an electronic copy

The armed services have been in the business of leadership development much longer than the corporate world has. Today's military leaders need tools and techniques to face a fast-changing and unpredictable type of enemy--so the armed services train their officers in ways that build a culture of readiness and commitment. Business leaders need to foster an adaptive culture to survive and succeed, given that they, too, face unprecedented uncertainty--and new types of competitors. Michael Useem and his colleagues at the Wharton School incorporate exposure to military leadership into MBA and executive MBA programs. Highlights include direct contact in the classroom with leaders in the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Department of Defense, along with field-training exercises and battlefield visits. The programs are designed to help students connect viscerally to essential leadership lessons. Four are featured in the article: Meet the troops. Creating a personal link is crucial to leading people in challenging times. Make decisions. Making good and timely calls is the crux of leadership. Mission first. Focus on common purpose and eschew personal gain. Convey strategic intent. Make the objectives clear, but give people the freedom to execute on them in their own way.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

[12] Power And The Presidency, From Kennedy To Obama Dallek, Robert Smithsonian, Vol. 41, No. 9, January 2011, pp. 36-43 Click here for available text on the Internet

Dallek, a historian and John F. Kennedy biographer, notes that in spite of his short term, Kennedy presided over tense escalations in foreign affairs. He responded to a heightened arms race with the Soviet Union and the Cuban missile crisis by expanding the power of his office, and claiming for the presidency a broad autonomy in foreign-affairs decision-making. Dallek traces how Kennedy's successors also faced crises during their terms, their responses to them and their interactions with Congress in charting U.S. policy. Approaching the issue in the context of current events, Dallek says even today's leaders seem not to have grasped the dire political risks that may arise as a result of unilateral decision-making in foreign affairs.

[13] National Military Strategy Of The United States of America 2011 Joint Chiefs Of Staff, February 8, 2011, 24 pages

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The first revision in seven years of the National Military Strategy calls for redefining leadership in a changing world. The document is the first revision since 2004 of the ways and means that the

military will advance U.S. national interests. It builds on the 2010 National Security Strategy and the objectives in the latest Quadrennial Defense Review.

[14] North Africa's Constitutions At The 50-year Mark: An Analysis of Their Ecolution Marx, Daniel

Journal of North African Studies, vol. 15, no. 4, December 2010, pp. 481-495 Ask IRC for an electronic copy

The author, with the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Autónoma University of Madrid, notes that the constitutions of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have undergone myriad changes in the half century since independence. The frequency of the changes give the impression of instability, or the inability of the Maghreb governments to find the correct formula. The changes do not necessarily indicate that the countries are moving on a constitutionalist path, as many of them were made in response to political developments, or to ensure the rulers' survival. The author remarks that this continual process of revision does point to a surprising respect for the constitutional process by even authoritarian rulers, who feel they must act within a constitutional framework, even if for self-serving purposes. Though constitutional reform has largely been cosmetic and stagnated, the author notes that civil society and the media are playing a growing role in calling for fundamental, large-scale reforms.

[15] The "End Of History" 20 Years Later New Perspectives Quarterly, Winter 2010, 5 pages Fukuyama, Francis Ask IRC for an electronic copy

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the triumphant celebrations of the West, a new chapter of history has opened featuring the rising powers of Asia, led by China. Though embracing free markets, China has looked to its Confucian traditions instead of liberal democracy as the best route to good governance. Will China manage to achieve high growth and a harmonious society through a strong state and long-range planning that puts messy Western democracy and its short-term mindset to shame? Or, in the end, will the weak rule of law and absence of political accountability in a one-party state undermine its promise? Francis Fukuyama and Kishore Mahbubani, the Singaporean thinker who has become the apostle of non-Western modernity, debate these issues. In this section we also republish a collective memoir by George H.W. Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev, Margaret Thatcher and François Mitterrand, recalling their fears and hopes two decades ago as they brought the Cold War to an end.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

[16] Would More Education Reduce Unemployment And Income Inequality? Indiviglio, Daniel Atlantic Monthly, January 17, 2011

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Would more education reduce unemployment and income inequality in the United States? The author, associate editor at Atlantic and former investment banker, does not agree; he believes that the unemployment problem is cyclical, not structural. The current situation is simply that there aren't enough job openings; but most of today's unemployed will eventually find jobs with their current skills once the economy recovers. As for wage inequality, most of that can be attributed to a small handful of people who have become wealthy, thanks to modern communications, marketing and technology. But for everyone else, incomes have not changed much. Education has little to do with this, as a college degree, or even an advanced degree, does not guarantee a high income.

[17] Got Dough? How Billionaires Rule Our Schools Dissent, Winter 2011, Vol. 58 Issue 1, p. 49-57, 9pgs Barkan, Joanne

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In this article the author discusses aspects of private philanthropy and support for K-12 public schooling in the United States. It is noted that private money strategically invested can define the debate on public education and steer educational policy. A number of topics are addressed including the funding activities of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation, the primary donors to U.S. public schools. The author rejects the widely held notion that U.S. schools are inferior and in danger of failing in their educational goals.

[18] Google And Money!
Petersen, Charles
New York Review of Books, December 9, 2010
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In his review of two new books about the impact of the Google search engine, GOOGLED, by Ken Auletta, and THE SHALLOWS, by Nicholas Carr, the author discusses Google's history, Internet "neutrality" that gives data equal priority, and the threat to individual privacy posed by increasingly sophisticated online advertising techniques that compromise Net neutrality. Remedies suggested to protect users include "Do Not Track" options and an effective wall between data collected to provide services and that for targeted commercial purposes.

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

[19] The American Civil War Still Being Fought Foner, Eric The Guardian, December 20, 2010 Click here for available text on the Internet

The author notes that a century and a half after the Civil War, many white Americans, especially in the South, seem to take the idea that slavery caused the war as a personal accusation. He calls for all Americans to face candidly the central role of slavery in U.S. history

in order to arrive at a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the past. Foner notes that, 150 years ago, abolitionists were a very small minority, in the North as well as the South. By 1860, however, two distinct societies had emerged within the United States, one resting on slave labor, the other free. This resulted in divergent conceptions of the role of slavery in the nation's future. Regional differences certainly existed over economic policy, political power and other matters; but in the absence of slavery, it is inconceivable that these differences would have led to war.

[20] Grave DecisionsCraig, David J.Columbia Magazine, Winter 2010-2011, pp. 20-25Ask IRC for an electronic copy

Columbia psychologist Sheena Iyengar applies her expertise in human decision making to the most difficult question of all: the way we die. There's considerable debate among bioethicists about whether patients and their families in the U.S. and other industrialized nations receive too little guidance in making difficult medical decisions. The American medical system, in this regard, is more typical than the French system. In France, doctors adhere to a traditional set of ethical guidelines that date back to the time of Hippocrates and hold that patients are incapable of acting in their best interest. Doctors throughout the West tended to subscribe to this view until the 1960s and 1970s, when the idea took root that patients are in the best position to choose their own treatment. In the U.S. and many European countries, a series of court cases formalized the doctrine of informed consent, requiring doctors to detail all treatment options, along with their potential benefits and risks, and to obtain patient permission before administering care.

[21] Utah's New Immigration Law: A Model for America? Liasson, Mara National Public Radio, March 18, 2011 Click here for available text on the Internet

After the state of Arizona passed tough laws penalizing undocumented immigrants, other states have contemplated similar legislation. However, Utah, one of the most conservative states in the country, recently passed immigration laws that show Republicans can pursue a more moderate course. Utah's governor Gary Herbert signed a package of laws - one an enforcement bill milder than Arizona's, the second a guest- worker bill that would allow undocumented immigrants to work and drive without fear of deportation. While many conservatives decry the guest-worker bill as amnesty, Utah elected officials who drafted the law say they are only trying to deal with reality. The 11 million illegal immigrants who are living in the U.S. have jobs, own property, have financial obligations and are paying taxes; deporting them all is not going to happen. Says one immigration-reform advocate, - the Utah legislation is a very rough draft of what we call comprehensive immigration reform at the national level, noting that this should spur the Obama administration to do something.

[22] "You Are Not Alone!": Anime And The Globalizing of America McKevitt, Andrew Diplomatic History, vol. 34, no. 5, November 2010, pp. 893-921

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The recent expansion of Japanese entertainment culture in the U.S. over the past three decades is remarkable. Japanese popular culture is widespread in the U.S., encompassing television shows, karaoke, character icons such as Hello Kitty and Pikachu, manga, and video games. Despite Japan's economic slump in the past two decades, America's ties to Japan have remained strong, partly because of the power of Japanese popular entertainment. The author examines what is possibly the most significant manifestation of this "new" Japanese culture -- the "reciprocity of global cultural exchange within the United States," or what he more specifically calls the "globalizing of America." However, even though diplomatic historians have begun to examine the power of ideas and consumer products, they have yet to fully understand the mechanism of cultural diffusion and consumption outside the parameters of official policymaking. Also, in marked contrast to the manner in which some U.S. cultural commodities, such as films, radio, newspapers and magazines, have expanded globally, due in no small part to the support of the U.S. government and military, Japanese popular culture has largely remained independent of state policy.

[23] The A.I. Revolution Is On Wired, vol. 19, no. 1, January 2011, pp. 86-97 Levy, Steven Click here for available text on the Internet

When writers and scientists began to envision robots and thinking machines as appliances of the future, writes Levy, they merely modified the human template, turning skin to tin; but when scientists stopped asking machines to reason like humans, they really started making progress. One of the experts interviewed tells Levy, "the computers are in control, and we just live in their world." A series of companion articles in this special report examines how significant the role of artificial intelligence (AI) has become in our information economy, even though it doesn't come in a human-like package. "Bull vs. Bear vs. Bot" explores the role of high-speed computers in controlling the movements of financial markets. At their best, the writers say, the programs allow precision and mathematics to govern the markets rather than emotion or judgment; at their worst, they can become "an inscrutable and uncontrollable feedback loop." Other articles discuss the progress of AI in transportation, medicine and on the Internet.

[24] Surviving The Crunch Opera News, September 2010, Vol. 75, Iss. 3; pg.46, 4pgs Belcher, David Click here for available text on the Internet

Since the economic downturn in 2007, the arts have been hit hard, as philanthropy declined and donors, once the major support of artistic endeavors, have often been in need of assistance themselves. One of the hardest hit is opera; the challenges are forcing opera houses across the country to explore options they might not have considered in more flush times -- whether that means staging a Verdi grand opera with minimal props or commissioning a new work. Belcher writes that opera companies can survive, as other organizations have found, with imagination, streamlined productions and creative productions. The author discusses the experiences of five

regional opera companies in San Diego, St. Louis, Memphis, Cincinnati and Tulsa, that have survived after unexpectedly losing millions of dollars from donors.

[25] Beyond Graffiti ARTnews, January 2011, Vol. 110, Iss. 1; p. 88 Miranda, Carolina A Click here for available text on the Internet

Miranda explores how a new generation is making street art that is conceptual, abstract, and even three-dimensional. Regardless of municipal vandalism codes, this new school of street art has attracted the attention of curators at an international level. Interestingly, the esthetic theories behind some of this art seem almost conventionally academic. What sets this movement apart is that much of it is inspired by or has evolved out of a graffiti tradition. Most of these artists have at some point taken a can of spray paint and placed words and images on a wall--illegally. Having embraced this gesture, they are now developing it into something new.